

V. REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Yoshimura (U.S. Patent No. 4,925,515) in view of Dijk (U.S. Patent No. 3,627,602). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yoshimura teaches an apparatus and method for applying a protective tape on a wafer and cutting it out to shape. The apparatus includes a wafer transfer table, an application roller, a subcutter, a main cutter and a take-up device. The wafer transfer table supports a wafer delivered from a loader-side wafer cassette and transports it to a location below an operative range of the main cutter. The application roller is movable while pressing a protective tape drawn from a winder shaft against the wafer on the transfer table. The subcutter cuts the protective tape along an orientation flat on the wafer while moving along with the application roller. The main cutter cuts the protective film along the circumferential outer edge of the wafer while being positioned above the wafer in a standstill condition on which protective tape has been applied. The take-up device winds thereon the protective tape from which a cutout has been made.

Dijk teaches a method and apparatus for laminating sheets in a continuous manner. The sheets are locally compressed in overlapping sections between two loading elements. At least one of the loading elements oscillate at a frequency between 0.1 and 1000 cycles per second.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to an adhesive tape applying method for rolling an applicator roller in contact with a surface of adhesive tape and applying the adhesive tape to a first surface of a semiconductor wafer workpiece with a second surface of the semiconductor wafer workpiece disposed opposite the first surface being held by suction holding means. Claim 1 recites that the method includes a step of applying the adhesive tape to the first surface of the semiconductor wafer workpiece while the semiconductor wafer workpiece is being held at the second surface by suction via the suction holding means, while holding the adhesive tape between the applicator roller and the suction holding means and moving the applicator roller and the suction holding means relative to

each other, and while vibrating the applicator roller and rolling the applicator roller across the surface of the adhesive tape.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 1. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests a step of applying the adhesive tape to the first surface of the semiconductor wafer workpiece while holding the adhesive tape between the applicator roller and the suction holding means and moving the applicator roller and the suction holding means relative to each other and while vibrating the applicator roller and rolling the applicator roller across the surface of the adhesive tape. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the features of the applied art because such combination would not result in the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claim 10, as amended, is directed to an adhesive tape applying apparatus for applying adhesive tape to a first surface of a semiconductor wafer workpiece with the semiconductor wafer piece having a second surface disposed opposite the first surface. Claim 10 recites that the apparatus includes suction holding means, tape feed means, applying means and first vibration generating means. Claim 10 recites that the suction holding means receives the semiconductor wafer workpiece and holds the semiconductor wafer workpiece at the second surface and tape feed means feeds the adhesive tape toward the semiconductor wafer workpiece held by the suction holding means. Claim 10 for the recites that the applying means rolling an applicator roller in contact with a surface of the adhesive tape and applies the adhesive tape to the first surface of the semiconductor wafer workpiece and the first vibration generating means vibrates the applicator roller when the applicator roller rolls across the surface of the adhesive tape. Additionally, claim 10 recites that the adhesive tape is applied to the first surface of the semiconductor wafer workpiece being held at the second surface by the suction holding means while the adhesive tape is held between the applicator roller and the suction holding means and the applicator roller and

the suction means are moved relative to each other while the adhesive tape is vibrated.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 10. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests first vibration generating means that vibrates an applicator roller as the applicator roller rolls across the surface of the adhesive tape. Further, it is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests that the adhesive tape is applied to the first surface of the semiconductor wafer workpiece being held at the second surface by the suction holding means while the adhesive tape is held between the applicator roller and the suction holding means and the applicator roller and the suction means are moved relative to each other and while the adhesive tape is vibrated. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the features of the applied art because such combination would not result in the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 10 is allowable over the applied art.

More specifically, in Yoshimura, as shown in Fig. 6, loading element 84 is vertically vibrated. This reference does not disclose that the roller 82 itself opposed to the loading element 84 with a sheet disposed in-between directly vibrates up and down and rolls on the sheet.

Thus, a combination of Dijk and Yoshimura will result in a construction in which the wafer transfer base 8 is vibrated as it moves while holding a wafer in Dijk.

Claims 3-5 and 7-9 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Claims 11-20 depend from claim 10 and include all of the features of claim 10. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reasons the independent claims are allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Claims 2 and 6 are canceled and therefore the rejection as applied thereto is now moot.

Newly-added claims 21 and 22 also include features not shown in the applied art. These claims are similar to amended claims 1 and 10 respectively but these claims recite "edge member" in lieu of "application roller".

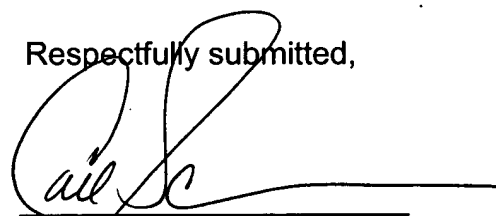
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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